

MHP's Rural Housing Initiative Overview



June 10, 2016



**Massachusetts
Housing
Partnership**

160 Federal Street
Boston, MA 02110
617-330-9955
www.mhp.net

Mass. Housing Partnership

MHP is a self-supporting quasi-public nonprofit organization that works with state government and with business, civic and community leaders to increase the supply of affordable housing across the Commonwealth.

Rural Initiative Approach

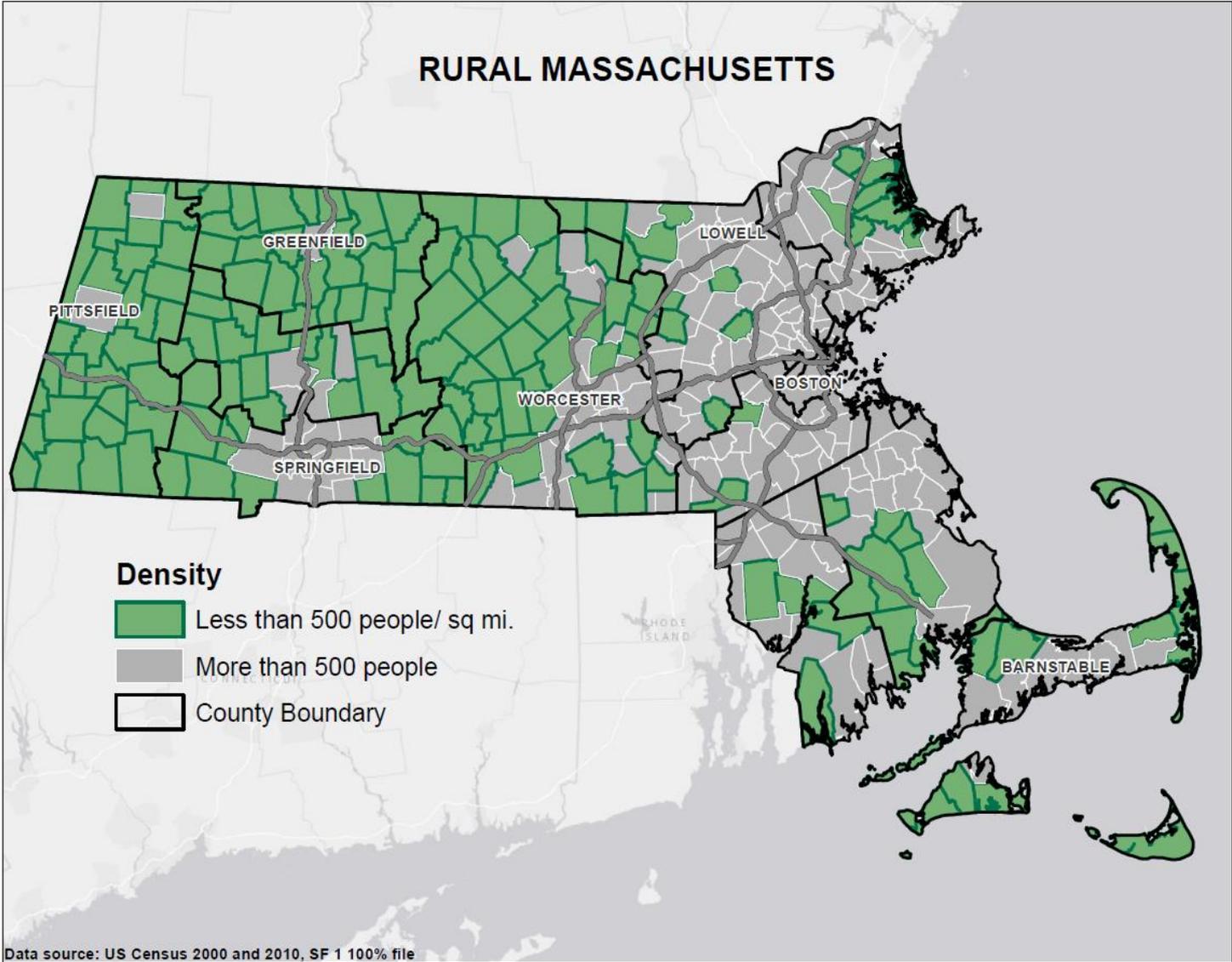
- Listening tour
- Research and data collection
- Investigate best practices from other states
- Steering committee



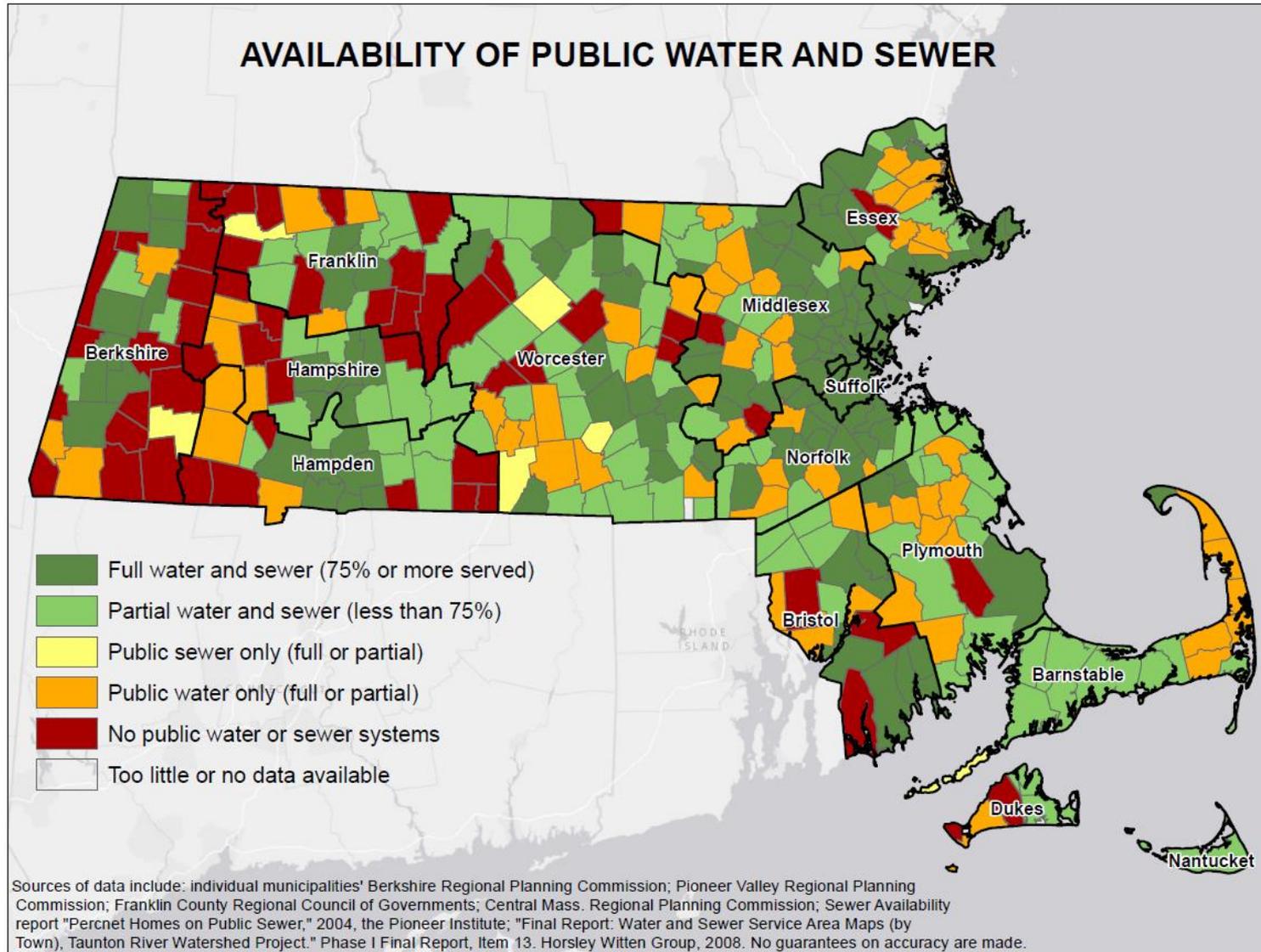
What's affecting rural housing?

- Job losses and underemployment
- Rapid increase in elderly population
- Second home market pressures in some regions
- Policies and programs that don't recognize unique challenges

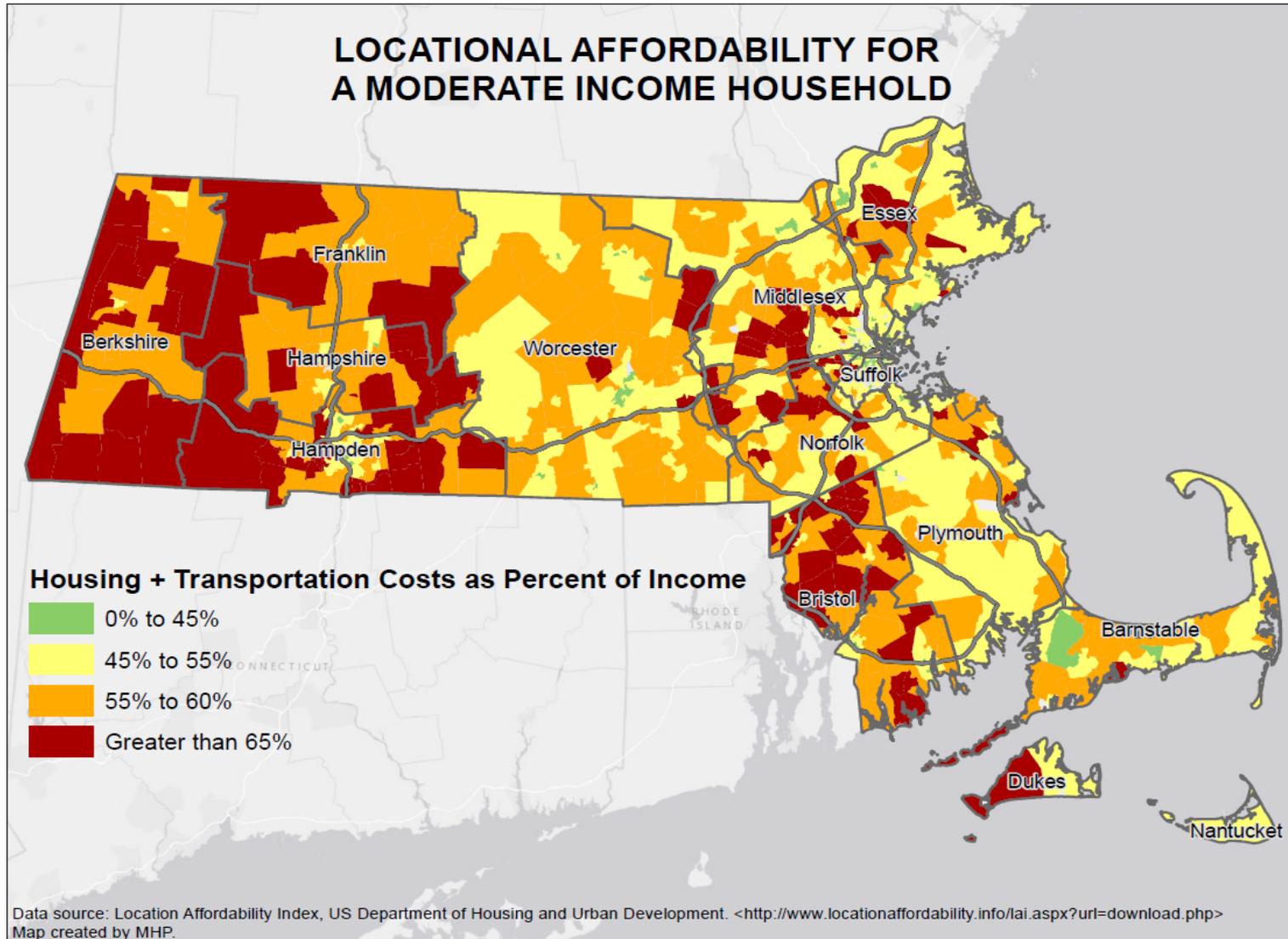
Isolation



Infrastructure



Income



Rural Massachusetts

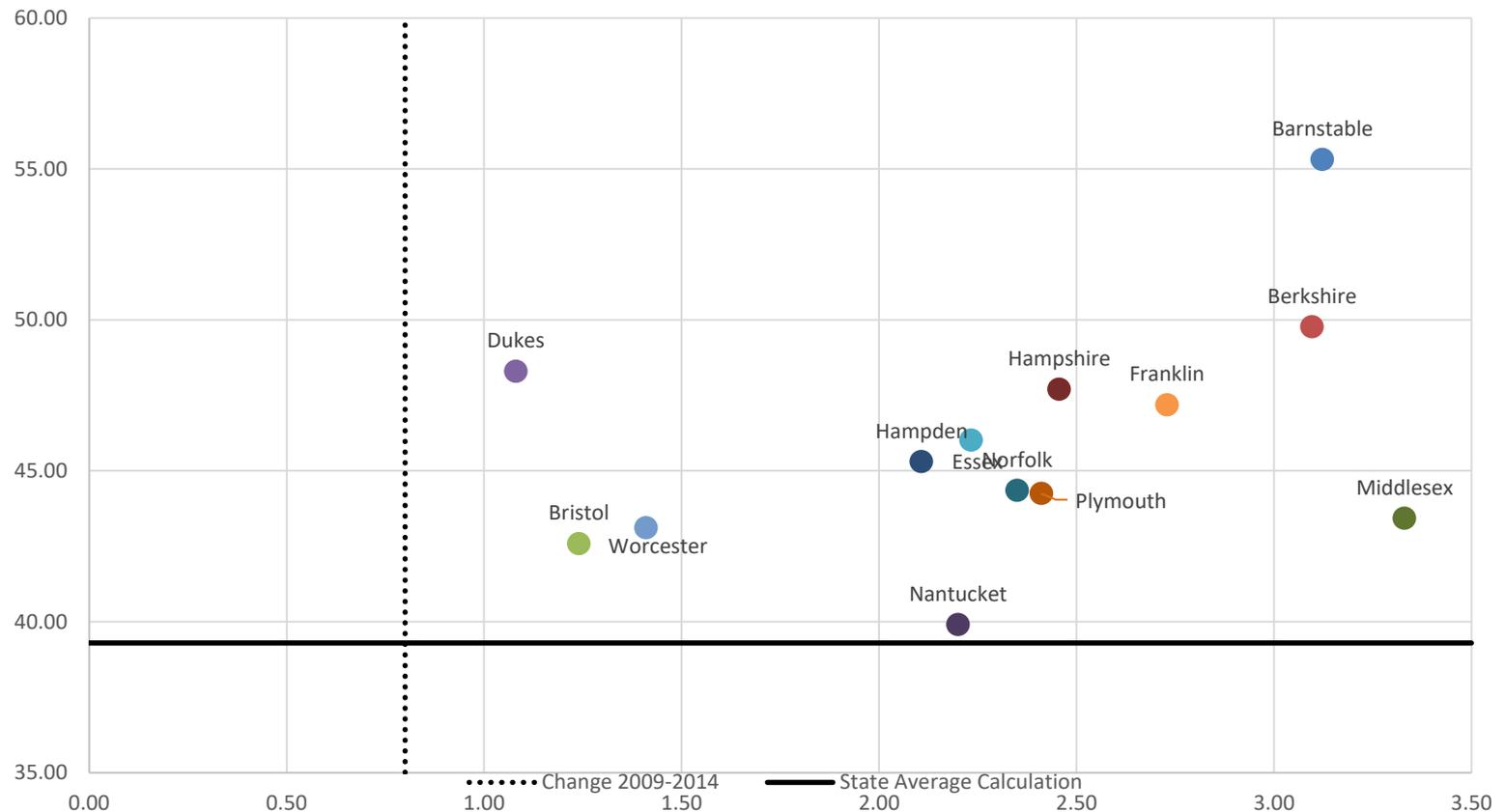
- Rural communities have a broad, and significant, geographic reach
 - 167 towns total, in 13 of the Commonwealth's 14 counties
 - Rural towns are home to 829,000 total residents
 - Roughly 12.5% of the state's total population live in rural communities

Rural Massachusetts

- As a unit, rural communities have grown far more quickly than the Commonwealth
- Between 2000 and 2014, rural towns saw 6.3% population growth, compared to 4.9% growth statewide
- However, rapid topline growth data masks deeply divergent regional fortunes
- Rural towns in Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Plymouth, and parts of Worcester County function like suburban bedroom communities
- The Cape and Islands, the four western counties, and outlying parts of Worcester County have struggled with stagnant or negative population growth, and a flat or shrinking jobs base

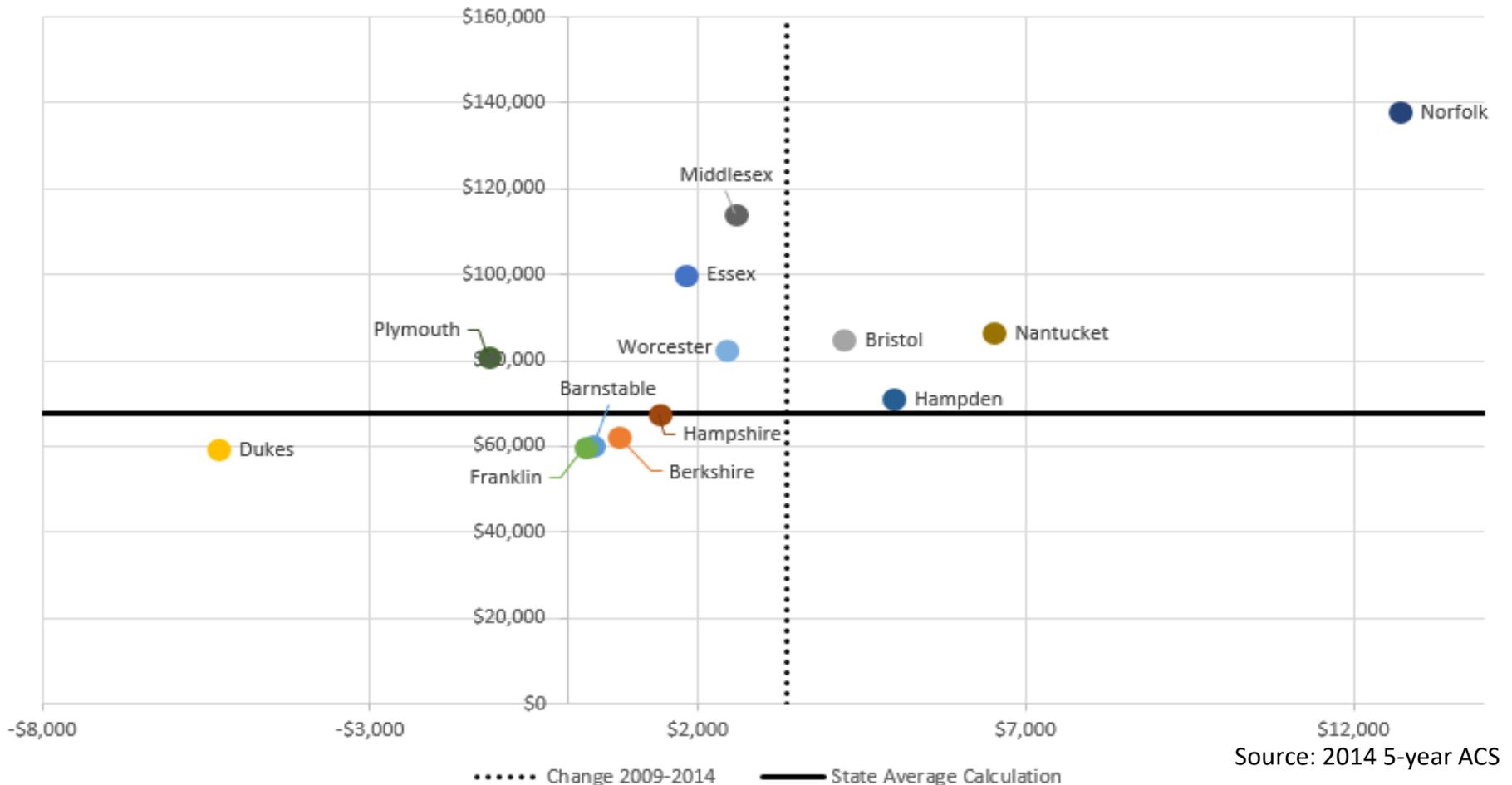
Aging Population

- Rural communities are older than the state as a whole, and aging more quickly



Stagnant Incomes

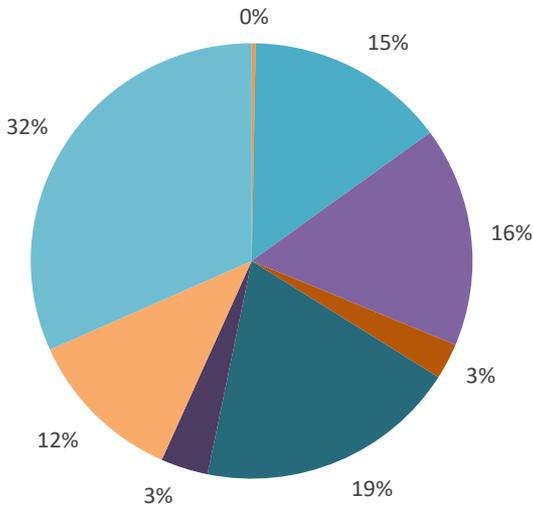
- Rural communities generally have lower-than-average incomes, and many are growing more slowly than the state as a whole



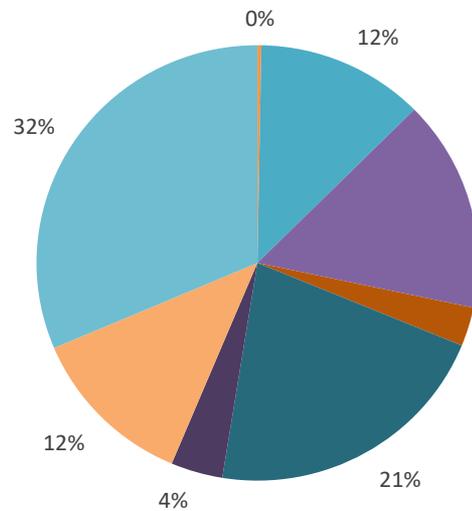
Employment Breakdown

Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties

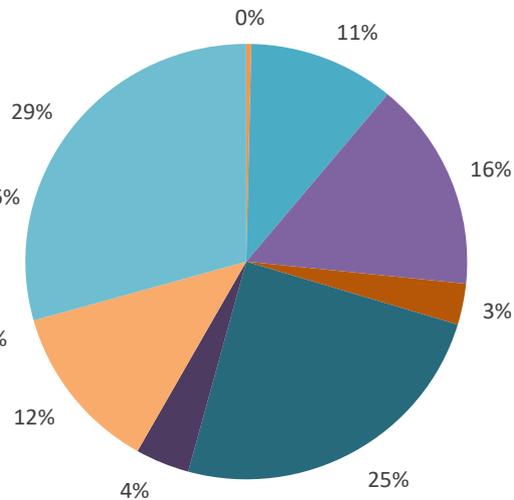
2001-
2005



2006-2010



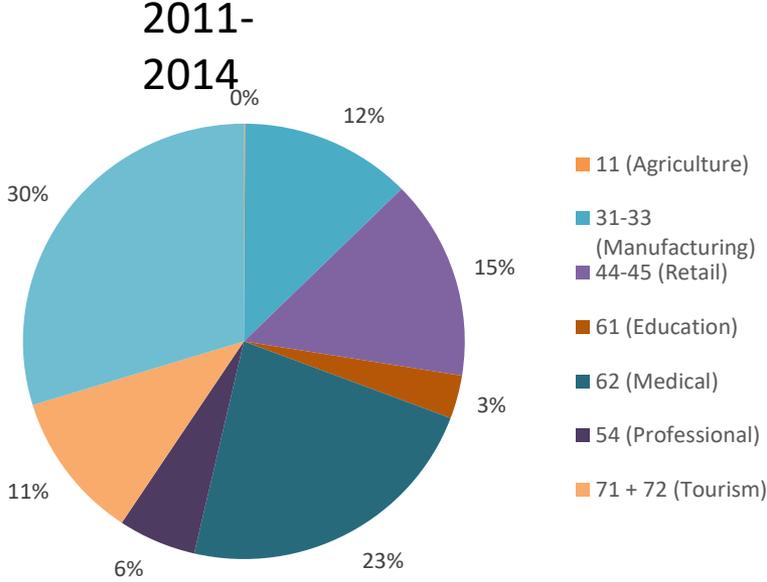
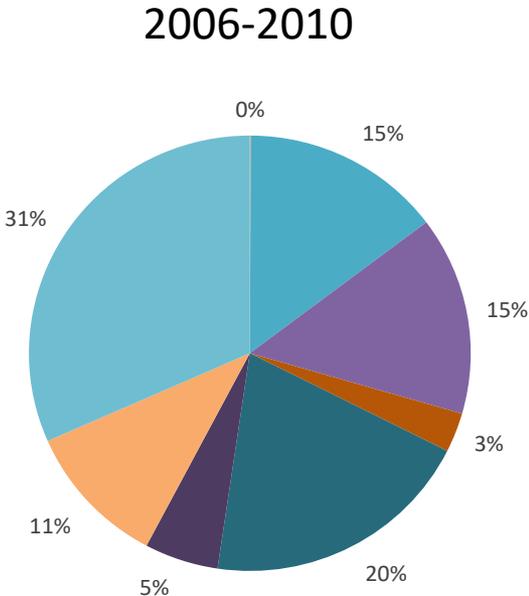
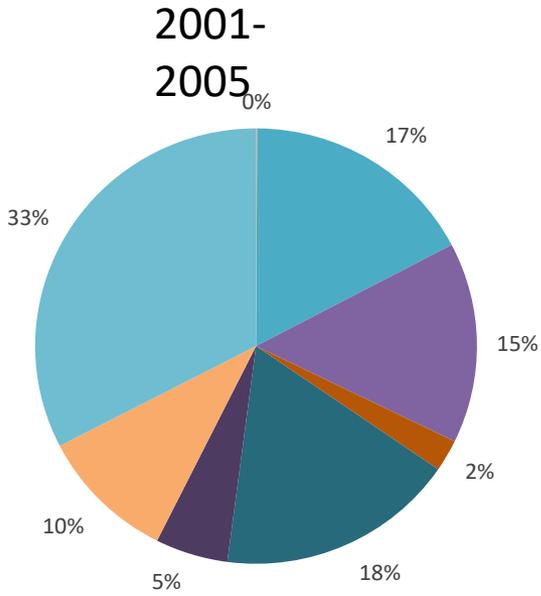
2011-
2014



- 11 (Agriculture)
- 31-33 (Manufacturing)
- 44-45 (Retail)
- 61 (Education)
- 62 (Medical)
- 54 (Professional)
- 71 + 72 (Tourism)
- Other

Employment Breakdown

Worcester County

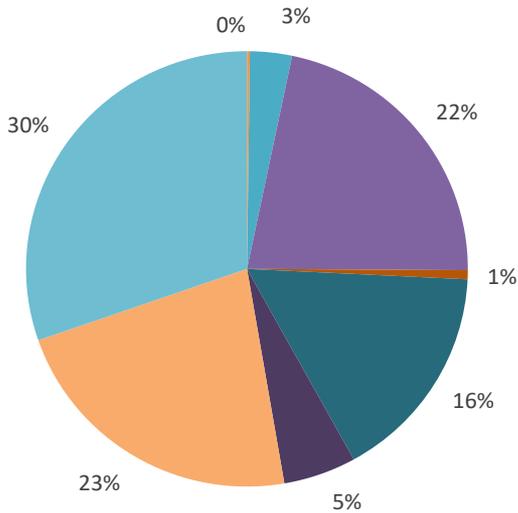


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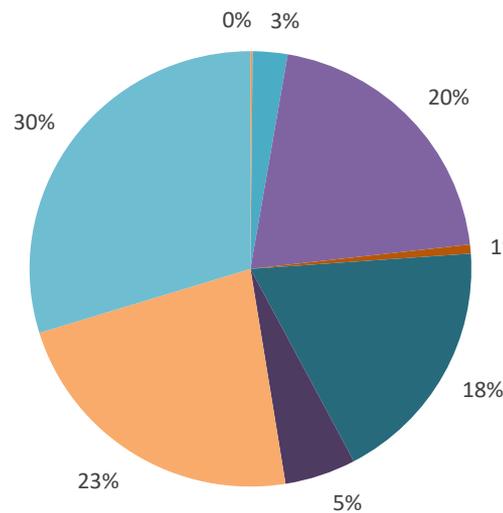
Employment Breakdown

Barnstable County and Islands

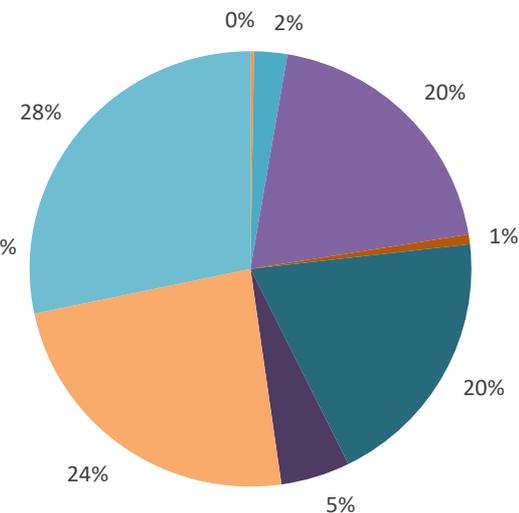
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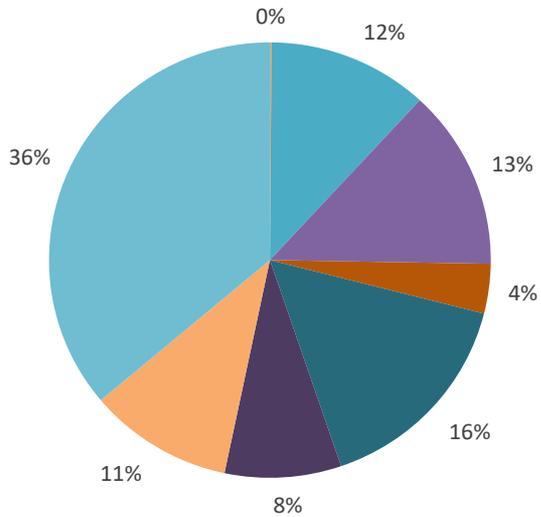


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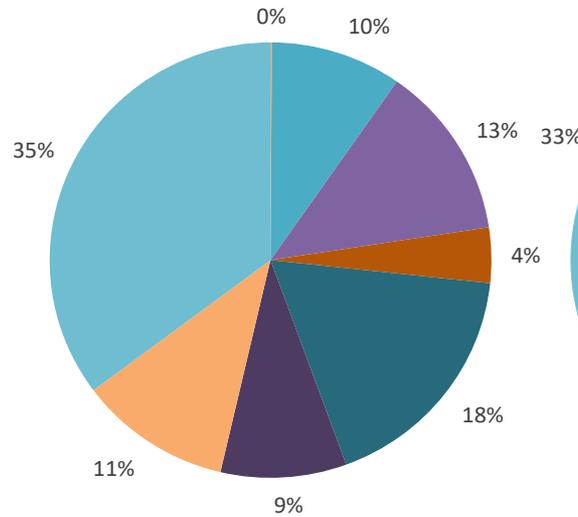
Employment Breakdown

Massachusetts

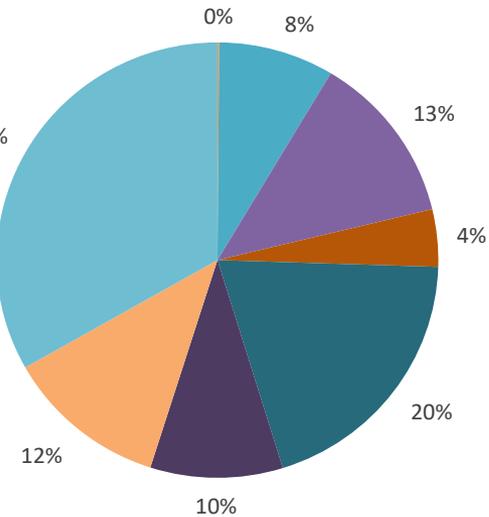
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Policy Recommendation



- Establish an Office of Rural Policy
- Maryland model: The Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
 - Member-based organization bringing together citizens, organizations, and local, state and federal government to advocate for interests of rural MD
 - Manages a data clearinghouse in partnership with a local university

Rural Commission Statute

Section XX. Chapter 23A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

Section 66. (a) There shall be within the executive office of housing and economic development, but not subject to the supervision or control of the executive office, a rural policy advisory commission. The mission of the commission shall be to enhance the economic vitality of rural communities, defined as municipalities with a population density of less than 500 persons per square mile, and to advance the health and well-being of rural residents.

Contact Info

Rita Farrell

Senior Policy Advisor

rfarrell@mhp.net

Carsten Snow

Program Coordinator

csnow@mhp.net